



## THE BLESSING CUP

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*At the turn of the century, Anna's family lived in the shadow of the Russian czar. They had to get out – but they didn't want to leave everything behind. In this story, a simple cup holds the story of one family's heritage – and hope.*

### JEWISH CONCEPTS

#### *L'dor V'dor*

A crucial requirement for perpetuating one's culture is to pass down its traditions. In Judaism, this value is called *l'dor v'dor* – Hebrew for “from generation to generation.” Sharing traditions, knowledge, values and stories provides cultural continuity and creates shared experiences and intimacy within a family. In this story, the Blessing Cup was, in the end, the one object this family had to pass down, which only added to the love and togetherness it represented.

As waves of European Jews began to arrive in the New World, carrying on traditions took on new importance. In Europe, many Jews had lived in self-contained ghettos; in North America, they integrated into the fabric of society. In order not to disappear entirely, Jewish families held tightly to traditions, ensuring that their heritage would live on.

*The Blessing Cup* is also a reminder of the importance of family, which is central in Jewish life. The very first *mitzvah* (literally “commandment”, but also understood as a good deed) in the Torah is “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28). In Judaism, the family is seen as a microcosm of the community, so teaching children about one's values and heritage is not simply a familial responsibility, but a communal one.

### USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

This story touches on many rich topics for discussion. Ask your child to consider these questions:

Anna's mother said the czar ordered the Jews to leave because “they are afraid of what they don't understand.” What do you think she meant by that?

Anna's family was able to take only a few cherished possessions on their journey. If you were in that situation, what would you take with you?

Why did Anna's mother give away the tea set that was so precious to her?

Why did Anna's mother care so much about the single teacup? After all, it was just a teacup! What do you think it represented to her?

When Anna's family left Russia, they no longer had to fear the czar's soldiers. Were there other things to fear? How did they comfort each other?

At the end of this story, the Blessing Cup breaks in half. Does it matter that it can't be used anymore?